1: Fitzgerald H-5 (1937-1938) AE3 Sino-Tibetan
Border Peoples AE3

enabled the farmer to buy the products of other regions for cash.

It is an ironical fact that the efforts of the Central Government of China, urged on by the moral pressure of the rest of the world, to do good, should have resulted in the infliction of great economic damage and hardship, at least temporarily. In 1935 the Central Government, inspired by the reforming ardour of General and Madame Chiang Kai-shek, introduced its plan for the gradual suppression of opium cultivation throughout the Chinese Republic. The Provincial Government of Yunnan, in spite of the prospect of severe loss of revenue, was induced to co-operate, and the suppression plan was applied. Learning from the disastrous consequences of the earlier attempt at opium suppression undertaken by the Manchu Dynasty in 1910, the authorities made no attempt to prohibit cultivation at once and everywhere. The plan provided for the suppression by *hsien* or administrative districts, and was applied in two stages. In the first year warning was published that suppression was to come into force. No fresh planting was to be permitted, but if opium crops were raised from old plants, no action was taken. In the spring of the second year public proclamations announced the application of the second stage of rigorous suppression. Farmers were warned to weed their fields, for if so much as one poppy were found growing in a field, the field was to be confiscated to the public lands.

This plan was applied to Ta Li and the other Min Chia areas in 1936 (first stage) and in 1937 the second rigorous stage of suppression was carried out. From the summer of 1937 there has been no opium poppy grown in the Min Chia region, nor in the other *hsien* of western Yunnan as far north as Wei Hsi and from Yunnanfu westwards to Teng Yueh.[1]

[1] Personal observation. The *hsien* of Wei Hsi and Chu Tien in the valley of the High Yang Tze came within the scope of the scheme one year later than Ta Li and Chien Ch'uan.

1: Fitzgerald H-5 (1937-1938) AE3 Sino-Tibetan
Border Peoples AE3

249 It speaks well for the influence of the Central Government
185 in a remote area, and for the authority of the Provincial
276 Government of Yunnan and its officers, that this campaign of opium suppression has been carried out with perfect success and without occasioning revolts, lawlessness or open resistance, although it has vitally affected the entire population of Yunnan, very much to their immediate detriment.

249 No one will seriously question the right and duty of the
185 government to suppress the cultivation of opium as the only
276 sure way of eventually suppressing the consumption of the
458 drug and freeing the Chinese people from an undoubted evil. No one, either, who has lived in western China will doubt their courage in undertaking a task both difficult and highly unpopular. That the nation will ultimately derive great benefit from the ending of the opium habit is incontestable; but that the immediate effects in western Yunnan have been most serious is also unquestionable. In the absence of any alternative export crop to replace opium, and the absence of communications making any more bulky export commercially profitable, the result of suppression has been a profound economic depression in the areas affected. Land values fell by one third in 1936, and in that and subsequent years business at the great fairs in and near Ta Li, when the Min Chia make their annual purchases of goods produced abroad or on the coast, fell to a fraction of that done in former years.

248 Against this must be set the efforts of the government to
185 provide a new export crop and develop communications. It is probable that had not the war with Japan absorbed the energies and the money of the government in the national struggle these efforts would have been more effective than they have been. An attempt has been made to introduce the cultivation of cotton. This has made some small progress in other districts, but the climate and soil of Ta Li are not suitable, and cotton growing could not be attempted there.

1: Fitzgerald H-5 (1937-1938) AE3 Sino-Tibetan
Border Peoples AE3

able, and cotton growing could not be attempted there. Silk, which can also be conveniently and profitably transported long distances on mule back, has been suggested. A few families on the Ta Li plain have taken up cocoon raising, but the technique is not generally understood, there are no large groves of mulberry trees, and many years will be needed before the production of silk can be of any commercial importance. So far the Min Chia have found no alternative to the opium crop. The government, as is now well known, have completed the remarkable motor road from Yunnanfu to Burma, which is connected with Ta Li by a short branch. The road was built by forced labour and as a war measure. A railway, which however will not pass within forty miles of Ta Li, is now under construction. The eventual benefits of these improved communications will no doubt be felt by the Min Chia, but at present they are more conscious of the demands on their time and energies.

The suppression of opium has therefore left the Min Chia for the present at the mercy of the rice standard, unalleviated by any cash crop raised for export. It is the working of this almost closed economy, as yet unaffected by any serious volume of intercourse with the outside world, which forms the subject of this chapter. Since rice is the dominating factor in this system it must have pride of place.

The method of rice cultivation is well known, nor do the Min Chia differ in this respect from other rice growing peoples. The rice is grown in seed beds planted in the latter part of March, the second lunar month, when frost need no longer be expected. The fields are cleared of the wheat and bean crop in May, and are then ploughed in readiness for the flooding, which is either effected by irrigation on land nearest the mountain, or by the monsoon rains which begin, on the average, at the end of May. As soon as the fields are flooded the rice seedlings are transplanted from the seed